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Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development

Security Council
Sixty-ninth year

Identical letters dated 15 October 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, dated 9 October 2014, regarding the twenty-ninth round of the Geneva international discussions (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex issued as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 33, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kaha **Imnadze**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the identical letters dated 15 October 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia regarding the twenty-ninth round of the Geneva international discussions

Tbilisi, 9 October 2014

The twenty-ninth round of the Geneva international discussions was held on 8 October 2014. The participants in the Geneva discussions took part, in their individual capacity, in the two Working Groups, the first focusing on security and stability in the Russian-occupied Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions of Georgia, and the second on the issues related to the safe and dignified return of internally displaced persons and refugees to the places of their original residence. The discussions were co-chaired by the representatives of the European Union, the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and attended by participants from Georgia, the Russian Federation and the United States. The Head of the Provisional Administration of the former South Ossetian Autonomous District and the Chairman of the Government of the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia, as well as representatives of the Sokhumi and Tskhinvali occupation regimes, took part in the twenty-ninth round of the Geneva discussions.

The meeting was conducted in a business-like atmosphere. The participants discussed all agenda items of the two Working Groups.

In the course of Working Group I, the participants from Georgia extensively reviewed the worrying security situation on the ground, in Georgia's Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions. Illegal military exercises, violations of Georgian airspace, an increased practice of kidnapping, robbery and cases of detentions for so-called "illegal border crossing" were brought to the attention of the co-Chairs. The Head of the European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia, Mr. Toivo Klaar, adequately assessed the security situation on the ground and comprehensively presented the security incidents that had taken place in the adjacent areas of the occupation line. The existing security context on the ground underscores the importance of an early resumption of the Gali Joint Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism without preconditions, based on the proposals for the Mechanism of 18 February 2009, and in full composition.

Participants from Georgia raised serious concerns over the recent announcement made by the Abkhazia occupation regime about the possible closure of the existing crossing points across the occupation line. This intention, if materialized, would pose a serious threat to the security on the ground, further strain the humanitarian situation, significantly affect the livelihoods of the local population and prevent people-to-people contact. The Georgian participants urged the co-Chairs to undertake all necessary measures to prevent such a development.

One of the central agenda items of Working Group I pertained to the non-use of force. The Georgian participants once again made a reference to a number of undertakings that strengthen Georgia's legally-binding commitment to the principle of the non-use of force. The Georgian side expressed its dismay over Russia's

continuous refusal to reciprocate Georgia's non-use of force pledge. Until Russia undertakes the legally-binding commitment not to use force against Georgia, one of the central objectives of the Geneva discussions and the pillars of the 12 August 2008 Ceasefire Agreement remains unfulfilled. With the purpose of giving impetus to the process, the Georgian delegation reiterated its continuous readiness to constructively engage in the drafting of a statement by the participants of the Geneva international discussions on the non-use of force, and encouraged the co-Chairs to reconvene the session at the thirtieth round.

The co-Chairs of the Geneva discussions and the Georgian side are unanimous in their assessment that the effective and durable guarantee of security and stability on the ground, especially against the background of Russia's refusal to undertake the legally-binding commitment not to use force, is the establishment of solid international security arrangements. In the face of the worrying security situation on the ground and the continuous vacuum of an international presence therein, it is crucial to stimulate the constructive discussions on the establishment of valid and functional international security arrangements.

In the framework of Working Group II, Georgian participants discussed the humanitarian and human rights consequences of Russia's illegal activities along the occupation line and in the adjacent areas. They expressed their serious concern over the discriminatory measures perpetrated against the Georgian population in both the Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions and the violation of the social, economic and cultural rights of the local residents. Particular emphasis was placed on the restrictions of the right to education in the native language and freedom of movement. Georgian participants called upon all participants to respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of the local population irrespective of their ethnic origins. Their basic humanitarian needs and fundamental human rights should not be sacrificed for political motives. Georgian participants once again stressed the responsibility of Russia under international law, as an occupying power, to ensure the protection of the fundamental rights and freedoms of all residents in the occupied regions. Georgia urged the co-Chairs and co-Moderators to find practical solutions to the outstanding problems, and to take steps towards ensuring humanitarian access to the occupied regions and creating human rights monitoring mechanisms therein.

On one of the principal agenda items of Working Group II pertaining to the right of internally displaced persons to a safe and dignified return, Georgian participants welcomed the co-Moderators' call to advance discussions and make further efforts in this direction. In addition, participants discussed the issue of missing persons and emphasized the importance of continued cooperation.

The Georgian side expresses its appreciation for the dedication of the co-Chairs to the main goals of the Geneva discussions and their unwavering efforts to safeguard the format and agenda of the discussions. Georgia will further continue its constructive cooperation with the co-Chairs and their teams with the aim of advancing the work on the substantive security and humanitarian issues as mandated by the 12 August 2008 Georgia-Russia Ceasefire Agreement.

The thirtieth round of the Geneva international discussions will be held on 9 and 10 December 2014.